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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002618

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: GOVERNMENT TRIES TO QUELL PUBLIC FURY; PKK
ASSERTS "CEASEFIRE" NEVER BROKEN

REF: A. ANKARA 2605

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2604

[1](#)C. ANKARA 2601

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: In the face of growing public outrage over PKK terrorism, senior government officials have urged the public to remain calm and the media to report responsibly. They also have emphasized that Turkey should not lash out in anger but rather take action that is in the nation's best interest. FM Babacan made clear that Turkey intends to exhaust all diplomatic options before resorting to military action inside Iraq. He is meeting with senior GOI officials today in Baghdad. The Turkish General Staff (TGS) has confirmed publicly that eight soldiers remain missing since the terrorist attacks, and has told us privately they are determined to rescue the hostages. Operations continue in the border region in pursuit of the attackers, and in search of the missing soldiers. The PKK issued a statement October 22 insisting that the Turkish military abandon plans to carry out a cross border operation (CBO) into Iraq and end attacks against its forces. PKK leaders have also said -- disingenuously, given recent events -- that the group has never officially ended its ceasefire declared in October 2006, but has been responding to attacks against it by Turkish forces. END SUMMARY

Government Urging Calm

[1](#)2. (U) Senior GOT officials continue to speak out to an increasingly furious Turkish public, reassuring them that the government is prepared to defend the nation while urging calm and stressing that any reaction must be based on common sense. PM Erdogan presided over a cabinet meeting October 22, during which ministers discussed the ongoing operation against PKK terrorists that attacked Turkish forces in Hakkari Province October 21.

13. (U) Deputy PM and government spokesman Cemil Cicek said afterwards that the cabinet decided on next steps and additional measures to be taken, including on the military, political, economic, social, and diplomatic fronts. He referred to steps the government has taken in the past 48 hours in response to the attacks and emphasized that the government and state security forces are determined to deal firmly with the continued terrorist threat. Noting that wide-scale operations continue, Cicek said 34 terrorists have already been killed since the attacks. Underscoring that the fight against terrorism is a national cause, Cicek said that "acts that will harm the unity and integrity of our nation should be avoided. The best response to such loathsome attacks is to assume a stance displaying common sense, unity and integrity, as well as calmness."

14. (U) During a visit to Kuwait, FM Babacan stressed that Turkey intends to exhaust all diplomatic options before resorting to military action against the PKK presence in northern Iraq. DefMin Gonul told reporters on the margins of a NATO ministerial in Kyiv that Turkey is prepared to take retaliatory action against the PKK but a military option is, at the moment, "not imminent." President Gul has convened a meeting of the National Security Council to take place at 1400 local time October 24. Further steps will be discussed at that meeting.

15. (C) FM Babacan traveled early October 23 to Baghdad, where he is planning to meet with President Talabani, the deputy presidents, PM Maliki, and FM Zebari. We expect Babacan to press GOI officials hard on the need for immediate action by the GOI and the Kurdish Regional Government against the PKK

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in northern Iraq, or a CBO will become the GOT's only option.

Operations Continue; Soldiers Missing

16. (S/NF) TGS has confirmed publicly that commanders have been unable to reach eight soldiers since the attacks in Hakkari Province. They have also admitted privately that the soldiers have been taken hostage by the PKK. Intensive counterinsurgency operations continue in the border region of Hakkari Province. Turkish military are utilizing helicopters along the border itself in pursuit of the terrorists responsible for the attack and in an effort to recover the soldiers who have been abducted. If the missing soldiers become in any way "public hostages", the reaction in Turkey will be explosive. Until now, the media have displayed considerable restraint on this specific topic.

PKK Declares "Ceasefire"

17. (SBU) Media outlets are reporting the PKK has declared a unilateral ceasefire after Iraq President Talabani announced on October 22 that he had asked the group to do so. The PKK statement issued late October 22 offered Turkey a ceasefire on the condition that Turkish forces stop attacking the PKK and give up its plans to conduct a CBO against PKK bases inside Iraq. The PKK said, disingenuously, that it has actually never officially renounced the ceasefire it declared in October 2006, but has been responding to attacks on its forces by the Turkish military.

Mission Security

18. (C) While anti-terrorism protests continue throughout the nation today (septel), protests and demonstrations in front of mission facilities continue to be sporadic and impromptu. They have, to date, entailed individuals or small groups arriving by car or on foot, shouting anti-American messages, and moving along when asked by Turkish police. A larger

demonstration organized by the Nationalist Action Party is expected in front of the consulate in Istanbul on October 24.

Turkish National Police continue to provide additional security.

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